



Enter the Dragon Year



Beijing's small restaurants are closing for the holidays as waitresses and cooks head home. While meals may be becoming difficult to find, those who choose to remain in the capital through the holiday have a splendid week ahead. The city's parks, temples and cultural centers are busy preparing a week's worth of exciting activities sure to educate and entertain.

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Artist leads organic effort

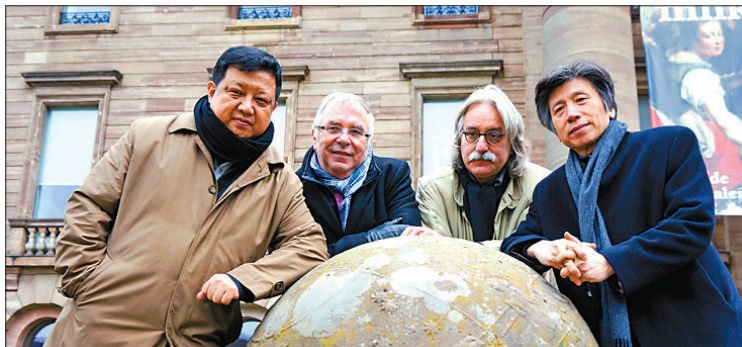
Emi Uemura believes Beijingers can share her passion for safe and sustainable food.



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Year of China in Germany

The China Philharmonic Orchestra is headed to Berlin to kick off a year of 150 cultural exchanges.



Miffed shoppers chuck eggs at Apple store

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City warms up for Spring Festival



Ditan Park, one of the most popular temple fairs, is just steps away from Yonghegong Lama Temple on North Second Ring Road.

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Spring Festival is around the corner, and Beijing's restaurants are preparing to face this special holiday.

While in the past, Chinese families began preparing food for their reunion banquets weeks or months in advance, many today prefer to leave the details up to a restaurant.

"It's the peak season for our business," said Guo Xiaodong, the executive general manager of Meizhou Dongpo Restaurant, a chain famous for its Sichuan cooking.

Spring Festival is an important period for family reunions. On the eve of the festival, families meet to prepare their best dishes and children are expected to bow to elder family members in exchange for money-filled red envelopes.

While elder family members prefer these traditional home gatherings, their well-to-do children see restaurants as an easy alternative.

"All our tables – even the seats in the corridors – have been booked," Guo said.

Guo suggested that anyone who hasn't made a reservation should look into home delivery or leave their number in case of a cancellation.

Many of this year's reservations were made last Spring Festival Eve, said Chen Siliang, assistant general manager of Huating Food & Restaurant Group. The group oper-

ates the popular chain restaurants Kaorouyuan, Kaorouji, Youyishun, E'mei and Hongbinglou.

Fengzeyuan is famous of its Shangdong dishes. It offers home delivery banquets priced at 1,588 and 2,688 yuan. The Shanxi dishes Jin-yang Restaurant promises for home delivery are priced the same as in the restaurant.

Group purchases of such dinners is also popular. Roast Duck King is offering an 866-yuan banquet as an online special, and Hong Lou Restaurant in Sanlitun has 1,280- and 2,176-yuan banquets available for clients to purchase online.

Many restaurants are holding raffles, magic shows and folk art performances to entertain guests on the eve of the festival.

Special purchases for Spring Festival are a popular tradition. Most families prepare fine candies, teas and roasted seeds and nuts for visiting relatives and friends.

Baked or steamed cakes, rice balls, roasted seeds, nuts and candies have long been an important tradition for Chinese families on the festival eve. Most families stay up together until midnight to welcome the first day of the new lunar year.

"We begin selling out of these goods even a month prior to the festival," said Wang Jingzhi, a saleswoman at a BHG supermarket. "Our

customers grab all the goods without even inspecting them like they normally would."

Many younger hosts are purchasing these items online, especially office workers who will not begin their vacations until January 23.

Other purchases include rice cakes, wines and prepared foods.

For entertainment, many will head to temple fairs. Fairs offer a glimpse of traditional arts, snacks, toys, books and acrobatics.

The Ditan Spring Festival Culture Temple Fair focuses on traditional culture, dishes and performance, and many expats have applied to work as vendors at the fair.

The Chaoyang Park International Spring Festival Carnival will gather the most foreign performers. Organizers actively solicit the capital's foreign community to create new programs each year. The Shijingshan Themed Park Temple Fair is another international carnival, and has been organized yearly since the 1980s.

There are a number of other temple fairs in the city, including Beijing International Sculpture Park Temple Fair, Yuanmingyuan Royal Temple Fair, Changdian Temple Fair, Daguan Yuan Red Mansion Temple Fair, Donyuemiao Spring Festival Cultural Temple Fair and Lotus Pool Temple Fair.

Brief

Han Han denies ghostwriting rumor

A well-known blogger has claimed that Han Han, the country's most famous young writer, ghostwrote his novels.

Han has responded by offering 200 million yuan to anyone who can prove his work as ghostwritten, the *Beijing Youth Daily* reported this week.

The 29-year-old, who in addition to being a bestselling writer is also a professional rally driver, has been a controversial figure ever since he published his first novel *Triple Door* in 2000. His latest essays discussing revolution, democracy and freedom, by contrast, have been criticized as mild.

Mai Tian, the former CEO of online private loan platform Mayi, posted a story on his popular blog last Sunday saying that Han's public image was entirely created by his father Han Renjun and his publisher, Lu Jinpo.

Mai said *Triple Door* was ghostwritten by his father and won a prize in a competition because his father was an acquaintance of the judge. Mai said another 13 essays on Han's blog were likely ghostwritten by others in 2008 because the dates of their publication coincided with dates he was off racing.

Mai asked how Han was able to publish essays on his blog and take part in races at the same time.

Han responded to the accusations on his own blog, saying, "I have been honest and upright since I entered the (literary) circle. I have a clear conscience."

Apple Beijing store pelted with eggs

Apple became a victim of its own success after the botched launch of its iPhone 4S on January 13 led it to suspend sales.

Would-be customers who waited overnight as temperatures dropped to -9 degrees C reacted with fury after the company's main store in Sanlitun failed to open.

The company sold out of the handsets at stores that did open and later halted sales of all iPhones at its five retail outlets in the country "for the time being," spokeswoman Carolyn Wu said.

Apple had advertised that the store would open at 7 am. At 7:15 am, people began chanting "Open the door!" and "Liars!" after an unidentified man said over a bullhorn that the phone wouldn't go on sale today, without giving an explanation.

The store stayed closed "for safety reasons," Wu said. Beijing police temporarily cordoned off the shop after it was pelted with eggs by the crowd.

"This is a debacle," Shaun Rein, managing director of China Market Research Group, a Shanghai-based retail advising company, said in a phone interview today. "Everybody knows there will be massive numbers of people when Apple has this kind of a launch. This shows very poor retail management ability."

(Agencies)

End of gold rush?

Regulators tighten control of gold exchange amid trading



Gold is especially popular with shoppers at Caibai this year.

CFP Photo

By Huang Daohen

No asset is safe. The sluggish stock market, restrained housing industry and surging inflation have left investors no safe option save the yellow metal: gold.

Although gold prices remained high last year, the precious metal still traded at a record level, spawning multiple unauthorized gold exchanges to capitalize on investors' insecurity.

But regulators are not happy about the competition.

Late last year, the central bank ordered that all gold exchanges, apart from the official one in Shanghai, cease operations as part of a crackdown on illegal deals.

Will this be the end of the gold rush?

Gold fever at year end

Apple's latest gadget, the iPhone 4s, is not the only gift that people are lining up for.

The recent decline in gold prices, together with year-end promotions, has sparked a rush on the purchase of the metal in the capital.

In a collective sales campaign, the city's top stores like Caibai, Gongmei and Zhongjin Gold reduced the price of pure gold by as much as 10 yuan per gram and provide more dragon-themed jewelry designs for shoppers to choose from.

"I am looking for a gold pendant with a dragon on it," said a 35-year-old woman surnamed Chen, who was born in the year of the dragon.

Chen went to Caibai, one of the country's largest gold stores, over the weekend after hearing news of the discounts.

"I had this idea several months ago, but the price just kept rising. Now it is going to be the year of the dragon soon, and since they dropped the price

a little bit, I decided to buy it now," Chen said.

Chen bought a gold pendant and the promotional 12-percent discount saved her 800 yuan.

Not only did Beijingers show keen interest, but some customers have been traveling to the capital from neighboring cities to take advantage of the cheap prices.

Caibai said its business increased more than a half from last year over the three-day New Year's holiday, with sales volume totalling 50 million yuan.

Although the store dropped the price to 390 yuan per gram, that is still nearly 50 yuan higher than last Christmas. The spot gold price went through a decade-rally and touched a record of more than \$1,900 per ounce early last September. It declined about 20 percent since then to around \$1,600.

"In recent years, the gold price has kept rising in Beijing, so the decrease has been attractive to customers," said the marketing manager of Caibai in Chongwen District surnamed Ma.

Ma is optimistic about sales in the coming Spring Festival.

Sales have also been strong at Gongmei's flagship store on Wangfujing Street. Almost 20 kilograms of gold bars for investment were sold on the morning of January 1 after the store adjusted its price.

Xinhua reported that gold sales jumped more than 30 percent over the three-day vacation in Beijing.

Clamping down

While consumers like Chen bought gold as a gift, others were rushing to hoard the metal for investment. Gold exchanges and trading centers have mushroomed in the country, and so has illegal trade.

That these have pushed gold to record prices worries regulators.

On December 27, the People's Bank of China, the central bank, together with the Ministry of Public Security and other regulators, issued a notice saying that gold exchanges outside of two in Shanghai are to be banned.

"No local authorities, institutions or individuals are allowed to set up a gold exchange or trading center," the notice published on the central bank's website said.

The notice said that the Shanghai Gold Exchange and the Shanghai Futures Exchange are enough to meet domestic investors' demand for spot gold and futures trading.

Other existing exchanges or trading centers were ordered to stop offering new services, and closed down.

Senior officials at the central bank cited by Xinhua said the move aims to harden regulations and promote healthier development of the bullion market.

Gold is an important component of the central bank's international reserve. The measure will "safeguard economic and financial security and social stability," Xinhua reported.

The country's gold consumption doubled to 20 percent of global supply in the past decade, while its reserves have climbed to 1,054 tons, counting 1.8 percent of the foreign exchange reserves.

As of Wednesday, the Beijing Gold Exchange Center said it has not received any detailed instructions. "But the talk of the ban has been going on for a while," an official named Wang at the exchange said by phone.

Wang said the measure is surely going to affect their

business.

To buy or not to

Should consumers invest in gold? Zhao Xiao, economics professor at University of Science and Technology Beijing, said yes.

Zhao said no commodities are safe, and the only choice to hedge risks is to hold hard currency like gold. Zhao, also a consultant to an investing firm, urged his clients to buy more gold.

"You have a growing middle class that has increasing disposable income," he said. "That may affect the gold exchange somewhat, but in the long run it would help the market to grow."

Before the central bank's move, many experts worried that the gold boom was a speculative bubble and discouraged the public from buying.

But Zhao said the current demand is healthy, and is a sign of a cultural and social imperative.

"Gold is indestructible and timeless. That is why it has been chosen as the basis of wealth that can be passed on to future generations," he said.

In China, people like to buy gold for dowries, he said.

Zhao's statements were echoed by billionaire George Soros and Alibaba Chairman Jack Ma. Being optimistic about the country's retail demand for gold, Soros and Ma have placed their bets on the country's gold market via the IPO of Hong Kong jeweler Chow Tai Fook.

Gold is always the ultimate hedge against times of turmoil, Zhao said. "Time and again we see that in any crisis, natural disaster or financial crisis, gold holds its value, and sometimes actually rises in the short term."

Chinese value cash-at-hand

By Huang Daohen

Wall Street bankers have long maintained that cash is king. But a new Nielsen study has found that Chinese consumers also value fast access to cash when faced with emergencies and investment opportunities.

The study, sponsored by US money-transfer agent Western Union, polled Chinese consumers who transferred money in and out of the country.

Chinese consumers attach much importance to whether money can be received quickly, the report said. Quick access to cash allows people to solve urgent problems and make quick decisions, even when anticipated expenditures may not be immediate.

Gao Jianhua, president and general manager for western China and Mongolia, agreed. Many Chinese people see cash as a token of confidence and pride.

"When parents receive money from their sons or daughters working overseas and share it with their neighbors, they feel proud," Gao said.

Chinese people, Gao said, still see cash as the most appropriate gift for close family members to maintain connections.

The country is the world's second largest recipient of remittances. In 2010, the trans-border remittances market in China reached \$50 billion.

"China has been an important market for Western Union, considering the volume of the country's overseas migrants," Gao said.

According to a report by the China News Services, the number of Chinese living and working overseas reached 48 million by the end of 2010.

Knowing the local culture and its consumers' behavior has become extremely important for the US money-transfer agency's expansion in China.

Last year, the company unveiled the world's biggest red envelop at a Chinese New Year celebration in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, the hometown of many overseas workers.

Red envelopes, called *hongbao*, still play an important role in modern China in spite of the country's growing prosperity, said Drina Yue, managing director and senior vice president of Western Union Asia Pacific.

Japanese artist leads organic food campaign

By Zhao Hongyi

Last year was not kind to the Chinese food industry. Crises included poisoned milk, recycled cooking oil, fake eggs and wines, dyed steamed buns, excessive fertilizer use and pollution of drinking water.

But while the above all captured headlines,

many people worked behind the scenes to improve the country's food, introducing concepts such as organic farming and farmers' markets. They offered training and lobbied for officials to draft safety regulations.

This is the story of one of those people.



Emi Uemura

Japanese girl and her Organic Farmer's Market

In September 2010, Emi Uemura, an artist from Japan, came to Beijing and set up her Organic Farmer's Market, or Country Fair, downtown. The market collected and sold organic products from farms in the suburbs around Beijing.

Over the past year, she worked on independent projects around town and collaborated with Vitamin Creative Space to create Mobile Farm, which grows plants in wheeled containers, and Calendar Restaurant, which uses food products grown from the farms.

Uemura has worked on many social projects, using meals as a vehicle for people from all walks of life to gather and discuss.

"I had no idea what to do when I came to China," Uemura said. "Fortunately, soon after I arrived, we found the topic of organic agro-products."

Uemura thought her organic market would attract artsy types, but it drew thousands of local farmers and foodies interested in healthy eating.

She and her colleagues realized it was a great opportunity to promote the so-called "Local Food Movement," an ongoing movement popular in Japan, Europe and the US.

With her organic market setting an example, more locals bought small patches of farmland in the suburbs and began cultivating their own vegetables.

Social project of organic restaurant

Uemura and her colleagues did not rush to the suburbs. Instead, they created and promoted Mobile Farm, providing organic products to restaurants and setting up the concept of sustenance of space: they make full use of the spaces and corners in the buildings they live and grow organic food in boxes, squares and movable containers.



Photo provide by Michael Eddy

Uemura's organic market draws thousands of local farmers and foodies interested in organic products.



Diners at Calendar Restaurant discuss the day's interesting issues over organic food. Photos provided by Danmin Fang

Now they produce vegetables and fruits for their Farmer's Market and Calendar Restaurant.

In June 2011, Uemura and her friend Danmin Fang opened Calendar Restaurant in Wudaokou to remind people to eat seasonal foods.

The two women prepare dishes with organic ingredients and talk to visitors about the advantages of eating organic.

"Our restaurant is not for profit and is not open every day," Fang said. In the last month of 2011, they held a class at the restaurant on how

to prepare kimchi.

"Every one of us has the responsibility for the food crisis that happened," Fang said. She believes that, as the final consumers, we need to think about the kind of lifestyle we want and pursue.

"Our market, farm and restaurant emerged as the result of this thinking," she said. "It's not an ideology insisted on by an artist from Japan."

A long-term commitment

The story of Uemura and Fang is only one example of

the organic campaign beginning to gather momentum in the capital. More are coming to promote the planting and export of organic products.

In 2008, Joseph Jen, former deputy secretary of the US Agriculture Department and now one of the five co-chairmen of the International Union of Food Science and Technology, joined China's Ministry of Health to hold an international food security forum in Beijing for three consecutive years.

Patrick Wall, former chairman of the European Food Safety Authority, reminded Chinese supervisors that "when a crisis happens, the most important point is to keep the consumer's confidence. [But] prevention is much more important than solving the problems."

Gale Prince, former chairman of the International Association of Food Protection and now president of SAGE Food Safety Consulting, agreed.

"Qualified professionals and technical trainings are the most important factors to ensure food safety," he said.

Helen Yu, press officer of

the World Health Organization (WHO) in Beijing, said the WHO has advised the health ministry and State Food and Drug Administration on topics such as food security management, inspection and risk evaluation.

The US Federal Drug Administration set up its first overseas office in Beijing in 2008. The office claimed that "they are focusing on the food products exported to the US only."

Eight UN agencies, including WHO, have joined local Chinese government bodies to launch a project in six counties in the western part of the country to provide food security training to women whose husbands have left to find work in the cities.

At the end of last year, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce declared that more than 99 percent of Chinese food exports are clean and healthy.

"It's only a short-term achievement," said Wang Jun, professor of social sciences at Peking University. "The safety of food requires long-term commitment and supervision."

Commemorating 20 years with Israel

By Wu Tong

Ambassadors from China and Israel celebrated the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries on January 12, vowing to continue strengthening bilateral ties and to share mutual benefits in the future.

"It's wonderful for us to gather together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations, even though we're doing it through video conference," said Ruth Kahanoff, Israel's deputy director general for Asia and the Pacific, in the opening remarks.

"We must remember that the relationship between the Jewish people and Chinese people started long ago," said Amos Nadai, the Israeli ambassador to China. "We also need to remember that China and Israel in modern times have achieved a lot even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations. I don't think there are two other countries that have achieved so much during such a relatively short period of time."

Since China and Israel established diplomatic rela-



Officials from China and Israel celebrate the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations in the Israeli embassy.
Photos by Wu Tong

tions in 1992, cooperation between the two countries has covered such fields as economics, science and technology, agriculture, education and culture.

This year, two-way trade from the two countries is expected to reach \$10 billion, a 20-fold increase from \$20 million in 1992.

Gao Yanping, the Chinese

ambassador to Israel, said at the conference that there is also great potential.

"For example, we periodically sent a Chinese delegation to visit Israel last year, and many high-level Israeli officials are expected to visit China this year," he said. "The cooperation between us will surely be tightened."

"We have experienced

some ups and downs in the last two decades in our relations. We also have different views on certain issues. However, we have always dealt with problems using a long-term perspective, seeking common ground while learning from differences."

China and Israel have achieved a great amount of diplomatic success in the past.



Amos Nadai

The momentum will be maintained in the future, said Yang Fuchang, the former vice minister of foreign affairs.

"I think China is a center of manufacture and Israel is a center of technology and design," Nadai said. "We can be complementary in many aspects like economy, culture and agriculture."

Nadai's tenure as ambassador began in 2007. In the past four years, he has traveled extensively around China to strengthen communication.

"The Embassy of Israel has set many international programs in China, for example the Mashav program (for international development cooperation). We have many Chinese graduates from Mashav program every year," Nadai said. "I believe their active participation in social activities will surely be helpful to build up the bilateral relationship in the future."

Finnish snowboarder wins Nanshan Open



By Han Manman

More than 20 superstar snowboarders from 12 countries met in Beijing last weekend to compete in the 10th

annual RedBull Nanshan Open at Nike's Snowboard Park.

"It's been awesome to see how the event has grown the last years, since I won it my

first time," said Finnish rider Juuso Laivisto, who won the \$50,000 (315,550 yuan) first prize, his second time winning the event. "I was stoked with

my win, there was definitely heavy competition today. The others were just a little unfortunate I think."

Photo provided by Zhang Xian

Roundabout hosts charity book sale

By Wu Hao

Sunlight streamed through the windows of Beijing Rego British School's cafe last Saturday as volunteers in red aprons shuffled about, sorting books and helping visitors find what they want.

This was Roundabout's charity book fair, with all proceeds going to purchase coal for a school for deaf children in Hebei Province. Books were sold from all genres, from fiction to travel to cooking. There was also a children's area for books and toys.

An annual event in years past, "this year we'll start to have it every six weeks or so," said Sally Hind, who's in charge of the book fair.

But Roundabout does much more than organize book fairs.



Leslie Simpson (middle)



Roundabout's charity book fair, with all proceeds going toward the purchase coal for a school for deaf children in Hebei Province.

Photos by Wu Hao

Inspired by Mama Tina

Many of Roundabout's volunteers have been involved in volunteering for a long time. Leslie Simpson, the founder of Roundabout, worked at a charity store when she was in UK.

In the 1980s, Simpson read *Bridge Over My Sorrows* and *Mama Tina*, which were about an Irish woman from a humble background who moved to Vietnam to help homeless children.

"When I read her story I instantly knew that I wished to do similar work," Simpson said. "My husband said he could apply for a job in China so that I could do what I want."

Simpson arrived in China nine years ago and volunteered at Blue Sky Healing Home for three and a half years.

"I saw, through doing that, the need for a donation point. Many expats, when they leave – what do they do with all their things? They can turn them into something [useful]."

With that in mind, Simpson started Roundabout in October 2008, first using donations from friends. She used the money to buy furniture for an orphanage.

As Roundabout grew, it needed a second and third warehouse to store its supplies. Its reputation attracted more volunteers, too.



Choosing among the many titles at Roundabout's book fair

According to its website, "Roundabout is currently supporting 30 charities within the Beijing area and many more in areas throughout the country."

"We first started by contacting a few charities and asking them if they would be interested in us being a central donation point and to support them," Simpson said. "They all said yes. And they told charities, and they told charities... we never actually had to lift the telephone and ask for help, they always found us."

The group also has a good relationship with the Shunyi District government, which provides them information.

Seeking transparency

With scandals rocking many charity groups in China, Simp-

son believes in transparency.

"Normally in our retail store, if we purchase coal for the orphanage, a copy of the receipt is on the wall, as is the picture of coal being delivered," Simpson said. "We would be crazy to steal [funds]."

Roundabout has also sent aid to other countries. It cooperated with a Canadian organization called The Fugong Foster Care Project, which has been working in Yunnan for many years, and also some Chinese organizations like Butter Lamp Foundation in Qinghai. All are reputable charities, Simpson said.

"First we have to ensure that the organizations we are working with are very clean and transparent," Simpson said. "So we do research on the Internet, ask a lot of questions from other organizations, asked those charities about the work they've already done. We have to ensure that things get to people who need it."

Everybody can get involved

Roundabout has a core team made up of a few dedicated volunteers who take on all major roles.

"We talk all the time and consult one another on ideas and projects," Simpson said. "We pull our expertise and skills together and make a great team. We offer each other emotional support, which is very important in this job." The team also

consists of volunteers who don't have much time but do what they can to help sort and price products.

Roundabout also gets a lot of support from locals. During the last book fair, Roundabout dropped bags at every house in their neighborhood on Friday with a note in English and Chinese. When they came to pick up the bags a few days later, they got a lot of Chinese books, and a lot of Chinese people came to the fair for the first time.

"There is a big thought in China that only rich people can do charity," Simpson said. At the same time, a lady came to greet her with a basket of home-baked cookies.

"Everybody can be involved, everybody has some talent or even just time," said Flora Clyde, Roundabout's communications director.

Find the right people

Although Roundabout has operated relatively smoothly since 2008, it has not been free of problems.

Strictly doing volunteer work can be a problem, Simpson said. She can count on 15 to 20 volunteers, but all are part-time, and the expat community the charity draws from has people constantly coming and going. Roundabout has five locals as its full-time staff.

Location is also a big prob-

lem – perhaps the biggest. Roundabout has a retail store, a 1,000-square-meter space it rents for 1,500 yuan per month, but it's located in Shunyi. It's hard to find to find anything of comparable size for that price nearer downtown.

"Bags of donations come to us, which can be jewelry, expensive things. We need people with the good heart to not take these things," Simpson said. "So that's what really stops us from expanding too much. We are not going downtown until we find the right person."

Passing on the trust

Roundabout wants to find a new affordable home soon, to reestablish its base in Shunyi, then move on to open more stores in the city. After five years, Simpson would like to be able to perfect her model and open stores in other areas of China.

"The ultimate goal is we want Chinese people to run this for Chinese, we're just showing how this works, but here has to be enough trust," Simpson said.

Simpson, as a charity veteran, has won many people's trust. But the problem with trust is that it's much more easily lost than gained.

"When we reopen we want to take three Chinese graduates," Simpson said. "The workload is huge; we want someone we can depend on."

Places to hang during the holiday week

By Niu Chen

Many of Beijing's residents will clear out during Spring Festival, including most restaurant owners and shopkeepers.

But the cupboard won't be completely bare when it comes to dining and entertainment. *Beijing Today* recommends Laoshe Teahouse and an ice lantern festival.

Laoshe Teahouse's folk temple fair

The teahouse's folk temple fair began this past Monday on a day called "small spring festival" – exactly seven days before the start of Chinese New Year – and will last until February 23. Under Chinese tradition, the small spring festival is a day to worship the Kitchen God.

Laoshe Teahouse invited folk artists to perform a dragon dance and held a ceremony to mark the opening of its temple fair.

During the fair, visitors will be treated to fantastic shows and delicious Beijing cuisine. There will be a lantern show and demonstration of Old Beijing peddling.

Trinkets

Every night from 6 to 10 pm before February 6, visitors will find folk handicrafts on the second floor of the teahouse, such as dough figurines, pinwheels, diablos, polymer clay puppets, cloisonne craft pictures and Liu Bao pressed tea.

Today and tomorrow, experts from the Yinglian Society of China, an organization of poets that specialize in couplets, will write New Year's couplets for visitors from 4:30 to 9:30 pm.

Performing arts

Many traditional performances are scheduled to be on stage from January 23 to 28. A special matinee will be added on January 23, 24 and 28. From January 25-27, a special youth crosstalk challenge will feature popular crosstalk artists He Yunwei and Li Jing. One part of the evening program is a lucky draw.

Art of peddling

Old Beijing Traditional Commerce Museum on the second floor of the teahouse will be open to the public for free during the temple fair. The teahouse will invite some artistic peddlers to demonstrate their craft, from hawking candied hawthorns to cigarettes and haircuts.

New Year's Eve dinner

New Year's Eve dinner is the most important part among spring festival celebrations. The teahouse will prepare two kinds of Beijing style New Year's Eve dinner along with great shows and luck draw on January 22 at 1,888 and 2,888 yuan per table. While dinning, customers could enjoy great shows and take part in luck draw arranged by the tea house.

Laoshe Teahouse

Where: 3 Qianmen Xi Jie, Xuanwu District

Open: 10 am – 1 am the next day

Tel: 6302 1717



Laoshe Teahouse will stage many traditional shows during the holiday season. CFP Photo

Longqing Gorge ice lantern festival

The ice lantern festival at Longqing Gorge in Yanqing County has begun, and it'll last until the end of next month.

"White Longqing Gorge" is this year's theme. The site has been divided into four parts: colorful lantern area, snow sculpture area, ice display area, and "Longqing Gorge Cup international ice and snow sculpture competition" area. There are more than 350 ice lanterns, 300 ice and snow sculptures, 500 flower ice lanterns and 300 tree ice lanterns on display.

The highlight of this year's event is dragon themed art. Exquisitely carved dragon gates and palaces are everywhere. Among the highlight is a 42-meter-long sculpture with "Go 2012" etched in, and a 25-meter-

high dragon pillar.

Other standouts include sculptures inspired by Chinese classics such as *Dream of the Red Mansions* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The Stork Tower and goddess Guanyin are also depicted.

Hobbyhorses, land boats, dragon lantern and other symbols of local folk culture can be seen through this festival, adding to its charm.

How to get to Longqing Gorge:

Longqing Gorge (Longqingxia) is about 85 kilometers outside downtown Beijing. You can take Bus 919 from Deshengmen (east of Jishuitan subway stop) to Yanqing, then take Bus 875 to Longqing Gorge.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyiing@ynet.com

Are there any groups for pregnant women in Beijing, especially expats?

Beijing United Family Hospital hosts regular events. You will meet many foreign and local moms and moms-to-be.

Breastfeeding support group (English) at Beijing United Family Hospital

Where: 2 Jiangtai Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: January 27, 1:30-3 pm

Tel: 6309 9714

When and where can I buy fireworks for the holiday?

Authorities have said that there will be 1,500 temporary stands that sell fireworks. All fireworks have already gone on sale. The cost can be anywhere from 120 to 1,200 yuan per unit.

How much do housekeepers cost? I met a Sichuan woman who charges 20 yuan per hour. How is that rate?

With the dramatically increased costs of living here, 20 yuan per hour is a great price for a housekeeper. You can also get a live-in housekeeper or nanny, but you'll have to negotiate the price.

I just moved into a shared apartment and I've seen three cockroaches already. What can I do to get rid of them?

Try the following:

1. Starve them (don't leave food out where the roaches can get to them).
2. Clean dishes thoroughly.
3. Put roach motels in dark areas where they are most likely to hide.
4. Keep the bathroom as clean as possible. Avoid filth buildup of any kind; cockroaches love dark, damp and warm places.
5. Clean your house regularly. Sweep under and behind beds, wardrobes and heavy furniture.

Can anyone recommend some good Chinese music? Is there any Chinese indie rock?

Try Twist Machine, Yaksa, AK-47, XTX and Cold Animal for Metal, The Suffocate, Chun Qiu, Zhan Fu, Dian Fu, Ming Jie for heavy and trash metal, CMCB for rap, The Reflector, Hang on the Box and other many locals for punk. Zi Yue and The Sand are also popular.

You can find the bands easily through Google or Baidu.

(By Wei Ying)

The true face of Chi



Fan Di'an (right) is the director for the art programs.

Yu Long looked tired last Thursday afternoon when he appeared at the press conference.

As the artistic director and chief conductor of China Philharmonic Orchestra, he and the orchestra had been practicing day and night. On January 30, he will lead the orchestra in a concert at the Konzerthaus on Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin to open the Year of Chinese Culture in Germany.

"Germany is the home of classical music. I feel both excited and worried. I'm trying to prepare a performance so impressive we'll knock the audience dead," Yu said.

"We decided to perform works by both German and Chinese musicians. It is a great opportunity to pay my respect."

The concert will open with the overture from Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Following will be *Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto*, composed by Chen Gang and He Zhanhao in 1958. The piece is based on a Chinese tragedy about Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai, often likened to Romeo and Juliet.

The finale will be *The Drunken Beauty*, a Peking opera with an orchestra accompaniment.

"People are familiar with Peking opera. We have revised it into an orchestral version. I hope people will see music as a way to communicate with the past and with different cultures," Yu said.

Born in Shanghai in 1964 to a family of musicians, Yu received his early music education from his grandfather Ding Shande, a composer and China's first pianist to hold a piano recital and record albums.

His formal music education began at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and concluded at Hochschule der Kunst in Berlin. "I admire German classical music. But this time, I hope I want bring more works composed by Chinese musicians," he said.

As the music director of the Year of Chinese Culture in Germany, Yu will return in the summer to lead more Chinese orchestras at Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, where China will be the guest of honor.

Many Chinese composers have found international fame during the past decade. It was difficult for Yu to choose whose work will be performed this year.

"Not all well-known composers made my list, for example Tan Dun and Wang Yi. The works I chose were those which bridged the gap between Europe and China," he said.

Among the Chinese pieces he selected was Chen Qigang's *Wu Xing (The Five Elements)*, which was created for a grand orchestra and performed by the French National Orchestra in 1999. "In this piece, Chen blends Claude

Debussy, Olivier Messiaen, Frederick Delius and Peking opera. It is unbelievable that such different musical genres appear in one piece," Yu said.

Another is Ye Xiaogang's *The Song of the Earth*, recomposed after Gustav Mahler's piece of the same title. From 1908 to 1909, Mahler composed this piece based on seven Tang Dynasty (618-907) poems. In 1908, Mahler read *The Chinese Flute*, the publication of Hans Bethge's volume of ancient Chinese poetry rendered into German. Mahler was attracted by the vision of earthly beauty expressed in the verses and chose seven to set to music.

In 2005, 98 years after the initial performance of Mahler's version, Yu and China Philharmonic Orchestra invited Ye to recreate *The Song of the Earth* using the same texts.

"We asked the professors at Peking University to translate Mahler's texts into Chinese. It took a long time for them to figure out which poems appeared in Mahler's music. Ye created his version based on the original poems," Yu said. "Ye uses many Chinese percussion instruments in his piece. If Mahler's version is six oil paintings, Ye's is six wash paintings."

There are more than 1,500 artists and scholars attending the events at the Year of Chinese Culture in Germany. In addition to musical events, the public forums give more open and direct communication between Chinese and Germans.

One project, "China! China? China...", will be held as a cultural event in the town squares of six German cities. It will bring together Chinese artists and scholars to talk about poetry, music, dance, movie, fashion and philosophy in a pavilion made of bamboo.

"In the project of 'Germany and China – Moving Ahead Together' (2007-2010), we built a pavilion in the squares of Chinese cities and invited the scholars to talk about German culture. Many Chinese people learned more about us," said Michael Kahn Ackermann, former president of Goethe-Institut China and consultant for the Year of Chinese Culture in Germany. "I hope this time our Germans can learn more about Chinese culture – not just its traditions, but the new and modern country."

Ackermann said the name of the project came from a speech delivered by the former Chancellor of West Germany Kurt Georg Kiesinger in 1969.

"The Chancellor said 'China' three times to call the congress' attention to the importance of China. But in the past decades, we had many misunderstandings about modern China. The project is just a thread to connect people in the two countries. Misunderstandings are never bad when they motivate one to learn."

By He Jianwei

In 2007, the three-year program "Germany and China" covered economic, technological and cultural aspects of the Euro-

Last April, a yearlong project called "The Enlightenment" brought artists and scholars from the two countries share ideas and

But German-Chinese cultural communication has not been

The Year of Chinese Culture begins in Germany in February. Germans will understand the modern country through 150 projects



The China Philharmonic Orchestra will perform in Berlin to open the Year of Chinese Culture in Germany.



Hong Ying Shu, a group of female drummers



Lu Hao will held a solo exhibition in Berlin this year.

na in Germany

– Moving Ahead Together” began a tour of six Chinese cities to promote European country in China.
 nt of the Art” opened at the National Museum of China, which helped
 about the Enlightenment and its effects on cross-cultural communication.
 been unilateral.
 ruary. During this exchange, Chinese artists and scholars will work to help
 presentations of music, opera, dance, literature, drama and fine arts.



German Ambassador Michael Schaefer(middle)



Year of Chinese Culture in Germany on January 30.

Photos provided by organizer

“In the project of ‘Germany and China – Moving Ahead Together’ (2007-2010), we built a pavilion in the squares of Chinese cities and invited the scholars to talk about German culture. Many Chinese people learned more about us. I hope this time our Germans can learn more about Chinese culture – not just its traditions, but the new and modern country.”



Adventurer of wanderlust at sea

By Charles Zhu

John Moynihan, son of New York's senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, went to work on the Merchant Marine during the summer of his junior year at Wesleyan University. The story of his days spent aboard a super oil tanker were recorded in an illustrated manuscript before he died at the age of 44 from a fatal reaction to acetaminophen.

When his mother discovered the journal, she had a limited run printed for Moynihan's friends and family. Now, a mass publication of his thrilling tale is being made available by Spiegel & Grau as *The Voyage of the Rose City*.

Moynihan decided to drop out of Wesleyan before he was 20 years old. His father, who as a young man had been in the Navy and worked on the New York City docks, worried about his son's intentions and opposed. However, his mother, Elizabeth Moynihan, was an ardent sailor who "immediately set about helping him."

The boy was bored with Wesleyan's scholastic life, which he referred to in his journal as "an overgrown playground" where "conversation focused on feminism and boycotting Nestle."

He also wanted to confront what he called "the sense of failure that has haunted me since I left school."

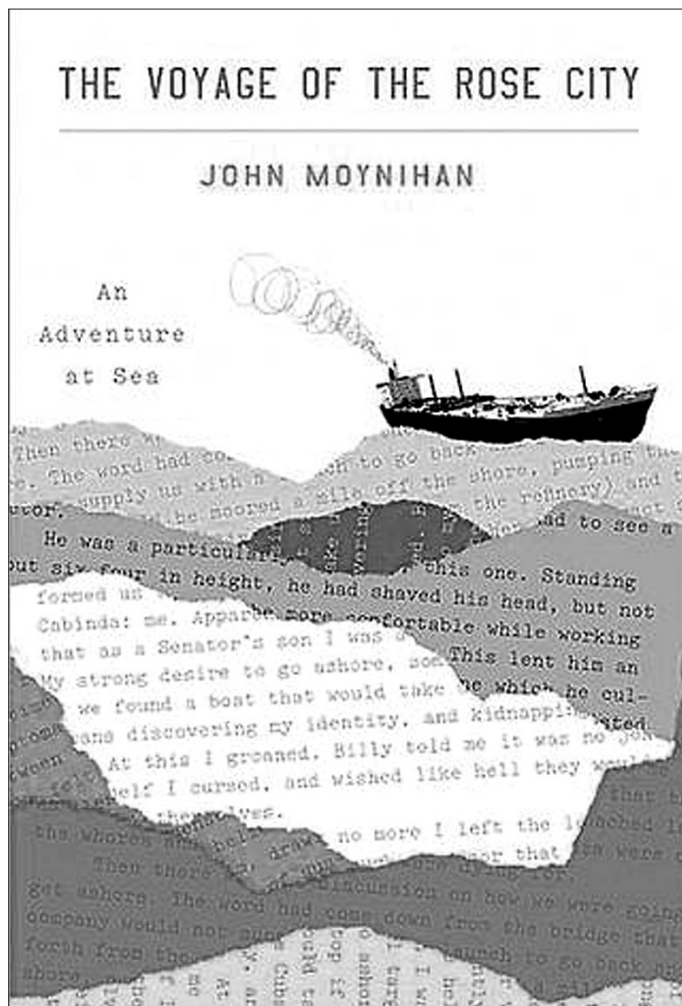
His first assignment was "forty-five days from Camden, New Jersey, to the Mediterranean on the Rose City," a supertanker measuring 894 feet long, 105 feet wide and 64 feet deep. However, as the ship sailed on the sea, forty-five days became four months across the equator, around Africa, across the Indian Ocean, and up to Japan.

It was a far more dangerous voyage than Moynihan, who avidly read Melville and Michael Herr's "Dispatches," had expected. The labor on the ship was hard, and dilapidated equipment aboard the ship put the crew's lives in jeopardy.

They passed through the Straits of Malacca three times, on the rough, stormy sea and constantly faced the threat of pirates. But John felt enchanted by the natural world around him, the lights of Cape Town at night and the phosphorescence that kicked up in the wake of the tanker, he listened to the stories of the old seamen and came to value the drunken friendship among the men.

As a gifted writer, John drew what he saw and kept a journal on the ship that he turned into his senior thesis when he returned to Wesleyan the following year.

A friend of John's recalled, "The Eire Pub in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood is not really a sailors' saloon, but it is an inviting, friendly place. I met there several times in



Voyage of the Rose City: An Adventure at Sea

By John Moynihan, 256pp, Spiegel & Grau, \$22

the 1980s with John Moynihan, who lived nearby."

"Over a few pints, John spun out his theories about Walt Disney's influence on American culture and the flaws in American higher education amid a smorgasbord of topics. An engaging young man of many talents and many interests, he had inherited his parents' sense of humor and sense of adventure."

Before he got on board the tanker, an official at the Seafarers International Union asked him to say his father was "a West Side bartender," which Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan had been. However, the truth leaked out and John received heaps of scorn from the Merchant Marine's crew. "College boy" was the kindest epithet. Some of the tough guy-type men were bitter as he had taken a job one of their friends might have had.

There was a succession of drama when the dreamy and long-haired Moynihan barely suppressed "fear of being thrown overboard or getting punched out." He was, he writes, "dangerously alienated." He could not distinguish between a hatchet and a crescent wrench. Nor could he make out which end of the ship was the bow. "From the hat I was wearing to my complete ignorance of the technical jargon," he writes, "I was a pathetic joke."

Gradually, hostility was replaced by the thrills of the sea. Like most crew members, he took a turn at the helm. "I allowed myself a wry smile," he writes. "What would the executives of Texaco do if they knew a 20-year-old beer-drinking ex-hippie who had been out to sea for only two and a half days was controlling the destiny of one of their largest supertankers?"

John Moynihan was able to crack filthy jokes and describe rowdy, rough and funny scenes in ports like Yokohama, where the seamen, recently paid, went on a drinking spree and wandered into the city in search of more drinks and attractive street walkers while he, a student of Japanese culture, refrained from the line of prostitutes and went looking for temples.

His writing style is unaffected. He is a more mature writer than his years, with the kind encouragement from his Wesleyan writing teacher Paul Horgan, a great chronicler of the American West. After reading *Rose City*, Horgan said, "Keep sailing – you're on your way."

Though not a great work, the book written by a boy barely 20 years old is a stirring authentic saga that records the fears and glories of the sea and funny scenes at the coast of Africa and Japan for young fans of adventures.

Timezone 8 book listing

Timezone 8 is a Hong Kong-based publisher, distributor and retailer of books on contemporary art, architecture, photography and design. This week, it recommends three upcoming titles to *Beijing Today* readers.



Zeng Hao: Summer

By Zeng Hao, 149pp, Beijing Center for the Arts, \$30

Zeng Hao's large-format oil paintings depict young Chinese men and women facing the viewer with blank expressions against monochrome backdrops punctuated by oddly isolated trees, occasionally doing away with the figures altogether.



Zhang Yuan: Unspoiled Brats

By Zhang Yuan, 193pp, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, \$19

The films and photographs of acclaimed director Zhang Yuan portray individuals on the outskirts of Chinese society. This artist's book presents a range of his color portraits of disenfranchised youth, lesbians, victims of abuse and monks, all of whom are interviewed about their lives.



We Are Polit-Sheer-Form

Edited by Mathieu Borysevicz, 290pp, Timezone 8 and Shanghai Gallery of Art, \$49.95

The Polit-Sheer-Form Office (PSFO) art collective was founded in 2005 by Hong Hao, Xiao Yu, Song Dong, Liu Jianhua and Leng Lin. PSFO initiates group discussions in locations such as factories, farms, schools, artist's studios, bathhouses and department stores. Their activities are documented in this substantial overview.

(By He Jianwei)



“Children have their own world.”

Childhood through a child's eyes

By Wu Tong

While there have been many documentaries about children, *Kids Kingdom* stands out as the first to present a child's perspective of kindergarten life.

But Zhang Tongdao, the director of the movie, has a long-term plan to explore Chinese children's early schooling life.

“I envision a five-episode series that follows the same group of children through kindergarten, elementary school, high school and college, and then into adulthood.”



Director Zhang Tongdao (right) focuses on documenting how children see the world.

Photos provided by Zhang Tongdao

As in most of Zhang Tongdao's works, children are the focus of *Kids Kingdom*.

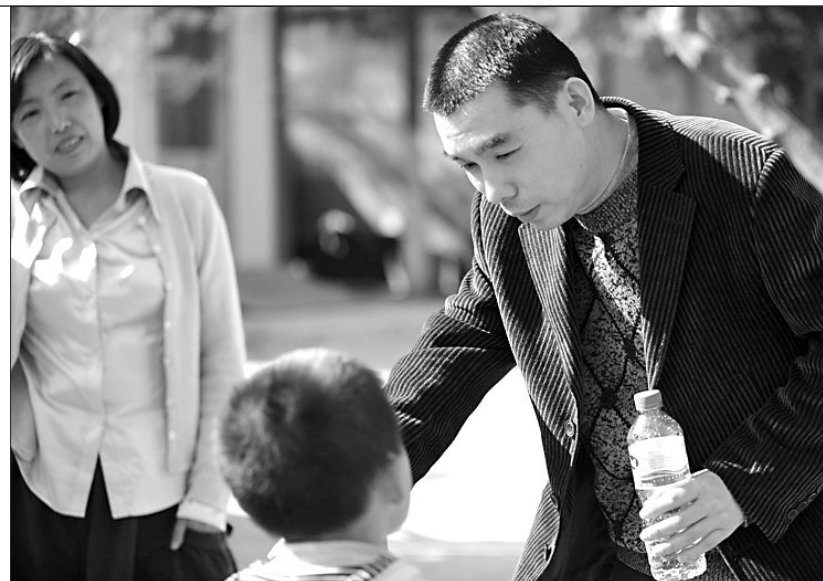
The film, in production from 2006 to 2008, follows the stories of two-year-old Xi Kun and five-year-old bully Chi Yiyang. The iconic roles help adults to step back into their own childhood and remember how children perceive the world.

“We parents always think we understand the world of our children, but I doubt we do. We see their exaggerated actions as misbehavior, but those are precisely their language of expression,” he said.

Zhang hopes his documentary will also encourage adults to reflect on Chinese education methods, which stress obedience rather than communication.

“When I began filming *Kids Kingdom*, my child was in kindergarten,” he said. “The experience helped me to communicate better with my own child.”

Zhang was bitten by the documentary bug in 1996 after a visit to Shaanxi Province. “Before that, I was working as a writer,” he said. “After I heard [Shaanxi's] folk music and saw its folk arts like papercutting, I told myself that I had to keep these crafts



alive through film.”

When editing his documentaries, Zhang relies on his academic experience as a teacher at Beijing Normal University to dig out the history of such arts. “I try to share the results of my own research with the audience. My films should communicate what I've learned to the viewer.”

Documentary is very different from other art forms, such as literature, music and drama. While traditional arts depend on inspiration,

Zhang said documentary requires keen observation and organizational ability to arrange real life experiences to convey a thought.

“It takes careful observation and critical thinking to make a documentary both reflect reality and convey the director's message. Without this, it is nothing but a collection of images.”

As an academic, he frowns on documentaries that sacrifice scholastic rigor and accuracy for popularity, stating that popular documentary cannot

satisfy all the needs of the audience.

His next project will be *Kids Kingdom 2*, a sequel film that follows the same group of children through elementary school. But his commitment to the series is not without risk.

Chinese film is becoming increasingly commercial, and documentaries – which lack celebrity actors and digital effects – are being thrown under the bus by the viewing public, he said.

“It is an era of entertainment where profits are all that matter,” Zhang said. “There is nothing wrong with entertainment and commercial film, but something is wrong when all we want is to be entertained. There has to be a time when we want to think.”

Zhang said China has much to learn from other countries to foster documentary film. “The public documentaries by the BBC and NHK and the commercial documentaries by Discovery and NGC are all worth learning from,” he said. “Compared with those giants, we still have a long way to go.”

Zhang said he hopes the series can continue until the characters get married and send their own children to school. “It would be the most romantic ending I could imagine.”

Fashion tips from blogging stylists

By Annie Wei

Fashion sites and stylists' blogs are treasure troves of information for women who want to improve their daily looks.

The Italian high-end online boutique Luisviaroma hosts regular events, inviting fashion and music bloggers from around the world to present different styles of the current season and give a preview of their selections for the coming season.

We also like the site's charity project with UNICEF – "Pug Dogs for Happy Kids" – where 20 designers have been chosen to make cute looks for the toy brand Steiff.



Blogger Shini Park



Luisviaroma's style lab



Blogger Chiara Ferragni



Blogger Andy Torres

Style blogger's websites

Beijing Today recently scouted out some blogs for fashion tips.

Chiara Ferragni

Ferragni is a 20-something Italian woman who is adored by fans from around the world and called "the inspiration muse" by some designers, including Miuccia Prada. Her blog features photos of herself and her travels and ideas about fashion. Her styles are interchangeable. Accessories, "it" bags and pretty shoes and scarves are her specialties in mixing and matching.

Blog: theblondesalad.com

Rumi Neely

From Santiago, California US, Neely is of mixed ethnicity: Japanese and Scottish. She has good taste in mixing vintage clothes, the latest designs and inexpensive items.

Blog: fashiontoast.com

Bryanboy

Although he's considered the Filipino version of Sister Furong – a blogger in China who rose to fame through provocative posts and photos – Bryanboy made a deal with H&M to carry out his own design.

He likes dressing up in women's clothing and heels, showing off his photos on his blog. His blog gets more than 100,000 page views every month.

Blog: bryanboy.com

Sammy

A fashion microblogger shows off chic and stylish female looks in Shanghai.

Weibo.com/iamsmallfry

Bei

This is a local blogger who focuses on shoes.

Blog: blog.sina.com.cn/pacefashiontraining



Pug Dogs for Happy Kids is a project that involves 20 designers.



Photos provided by Luisviaroma.com

Beijing duck and Chinese New Year Eve feast

By Annie Wei

Beijing Today recommends a new Beijing duck restaurant in Sanlitun with good deals on Chinese New Year's eve and two online recipe sites for those who prefer to cook at home.



Duck liver, 38 yuan

New duck spot by Sanlitun

Looking for a unique duck experience? A restaurant near Sanlitun, Bianyifang, uses a closed-door oven to roast ducks, a technique introduced to Beijing from the Yangtze River area during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The chef must maintain good control of the temperature. The meat doesn't come out as dry when it's roasted in a closed oven instead of an open oven. The duck's skin also comes out crispy but not greasy.

We recommend the flower-flavored Beijing duck (starting at 188 yuan). The duck is soaked in water lilies, dates and tea before roasting for a pleasant aroma.

As a duck house, the restaurant has developed hundreds of dishes made from duck. The duck liver (38 yuan) makes for a great appetizer.

From the store's establishment in 1855 to the early 1910s, Bianyifang was not a restaurant but more like a workshop that produced many ready-to-eat meat products like sausages and meatballs.

When it started serving customers, it specialized in Shandong cuisine, so Bianyifang is also known for its Shandong dishes.

Its specialties include tangchu daliyu (88 yuan), carp in wine-flavored sauce.

A big carp is braised in sauce made from fermented wine, and it comes out sweet and a little sour. Customers can request the chef debone the fish first to make a fillet.

We like the jiuzhuang dachang (98 yuan), nine-turns of pork intestine. It's a classic Shandong recipe. The intestines are boiled, deep-fried to golden brown and then braised with garlic, scallion, ginger, soy sauce and sugar.

The restaurant will offer a Spring Festival special set menu. A table of 10 will get six cold dishes, a duck and eight hot dishes for 1,260 yuan. A fancier set menu for 3,500 yuan is also available.

Bianyifang – Shimao Gongsan

Where: 4th floor of Shimao Department Store, 13 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 11 am – 10 pm
Tel: 8405 9699



Abalone, price to be determined



Beijing duck, starting from 188 yuan



Appetizer



CFP Photo



Bianyifang restaurant



Nine-turns of pork intestine, 98 yuan

Photos by Hu Yuanjun

Creating a feast with e-recipes

Nothing warms up your stomach during the holidays like a delicious homemade feast. With help from two popular recipe sites, anyone can make delicious Chinese food.

Wenyl's Kitchen

This is a free iPad app by food blogger Ma Wenyl. Her blog has all kinds of recipes and has attracted 100 million visitors; her microblog has half a million followers. The app's recipes are selected from 2,000 recipes on her blog and 13 cookbooks. Recipes are clearly categorized. Although it's in Chinese only, there are pictures for each procedure, and all ingredients can be obtained from local markets or grocery stores.

Website: itunes.apple.com/us/app/id493244898

Xiachufang

In three months, xiachufang.com already had 200,000 registered users. Its recipes for delicious foods are simple and easy to follow. Users can upload their dishes with photos and share their tips. (All recipes are in Chinese.)

Dinning

Love bites at the sweet spot

Sweets and treats for you and your honey abound at the Sweet Spot on Valentine's Day, when China World Hotel's award-winning Executive Pastry Chef Jonathan Wu and his team will prepare a luscious selection of heart-shaped and "LOVE"-shaped strawberry cakes and chocolates.

Surprise your sweetheart with red roses, free with your Valentine cake when ordered at least three days in advance.

Where: Sweet Spot, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6505 0885, 6505 5838



Celebrate Chinese New Year at Park Plaza Beijing Science Park

Celebrate the Year of the Dragon with friends, family and colleagues at Four Seasons Restaurant. An attractive selection of set menus featuring the best of the Cantonese and Hunan kitchens has been created to make your guests' New Year's festivities even merrier.

The Chinese New Year Set Menu includes free Coca-Cola, Sprite, orange drink and local beer (2 hours).

Where: Park Plaza Beijing Science Park, 25 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

When: Until February 6

Cost: 298 yuan per person (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 8235 6699



Spring Festival set menu

Happy Valley is offering a Chinese set menu and exceptional a la carte selection, including several typical dishes traditionally eaten to usher in a prosperous, happy and bright future.

Dishes include braised, dried oysters with lettuce, suckling pig platter, steamed mandarin fish and other popular delicacies sure to please you and your family.

During the Chinese New Year period of January 22-27, dine at Happy Valley Chinese Restaurant and enjoy four free Beijing dumplings per person.

Where: Happy Valley, Swissotel



Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 6

Cost: Set menu starts from 288 yuan per person (minimum of 8)

Tel: 6553 2288 ext. 2146 or 2148

Email:

F&BOffice.beijing@swissotel.com

Show your love at Café on the 6th

Celebrate this Valentine's Day at Café on the 6th with a five-course menu designed by Executive Chef Robert Gynne. The chef's creations are perfect for sharing with your loved one!

Café on the 6th's Valentine's Day set menu features oyster tempura with caviar, creamy foie gras soup, medallions of lobster with vanilla, wagyu skirt steak served with truffle puree and port wine sauce, a chocolate dream platter with dulce de leche bar, a rum and chocolate pudding and chocolate soufflé.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Chaoyang U-Town, 3 Sanfeng North Area, Chaoyang District

When: February 14, 5:30-9 pm

Cost: 666 yuan per couple (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 5909 6688 ext. 3219



Airlines

Jetstar doubles services to Osaka and Singapore

Taipei travelers now have twice as many reasons to travel to Singapore and Osaka with Jetstar announcing it will increase its daily low-fare service to twice daily from March 25, 2012.

Since opening the route in September 2010, Jetstar has been the only low-fare carrier to connect Taipei and Osaka.

Jetstar Asia's CEO Chong Phit Lian said travelers are making full use of the route.

"Growth of our fleet has allowed us to meet the strong consumer demand for this service," she said.

"In 2012, Taipei travelers will continue to have more low fare options via our hub in Singapore and our new domestic network in Japan, which is expected to include Osaka," Chong said.

Visitor volume between Taiwan and Japan has been strong.

For the first 10 months of 2011, Japan was the second most popular destination for travelers departing from Taiwan, while Taiwan was the third most popular destination for those departing from Japan, according to the Taiwan Tourism Bureau and Japan National Tourist Organization.

More than 700,000 tourists from Japan and Taiwan visited Singapore in the first 10 months of 2011, a 24 percent increase from the previous year, according to the Singapore Tourism Board.



Hotel

Marriott International named top employer

Marriott International has been named one of "China's Top Employers 2012" by the CRF Institute. It is the only hotel management company on the list.

The 32 award winners were selected from a pool of 923 organizations based on the results of a thorough research and evaluation process. The CRF Institute said companies on the list were recognized for their outstanding performance in providing employee benefits, a strong corporate culture and the ability to recognize and develop talented individuals.

"To ensure the robust expansion of Marriott International in China, developing talents is crucial. We are committed to identifying, training, supporting and establishing career paths for our executives and helping them develop into future Marriott leaders," said Henry Lee, senior vice president of Greater China of Marriott International.

Marriott International manages 60 hotels

and employs 15,500 people in China. Its portfolio will increase to 100 hotels by 2015, making it be one of the largest hotel groups in the country.

"Marriott prides itself on fostering growth and development of our associates. For more than eight decades, our company has been guided by the motto from our founder Mr. J. Willard Marriott: take good care of the associates and they'll take good care of the customers, and they'll return again and again. We are most pleased that these efforts have been recognized in China," Lee said.

Marriott International has long been considered a great place to work in the international arena. It has appeared on *Fortune* magazine's list of the "100 Best Companies to Work For" each year since the list was first published in 1998. The chain has also been recognized by several prominent publications, including *Working Mother*, *DiversityInc* and *LATINA Style* magazines.

Fri, Jan. 20

Movie

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)

Joel is stunned to discover that his girlfriend Clementine has had the memories of their tumultuous relation-

ship erased. Out of desperation, he contacts the inventor of the process, Dr. Howard Mierzwiak, to have Clementine removed from his own memory. But as Joel's memories progressively begin to disappear, he begins to discover their earlier passion.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 5900 9473

Nightlife

Clubbed to Death

Born in the US, DJ Boflex raved around Berlin for a few years before heading to China to pursue a career.

Where: Club Haze, SOHO A-101, 22 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5900 6128



Sat, Jan. 21



Movie

Little Red Flowers (2006)

Based on Wang Shuo's novel *Could Be Beautiful*, this film depicts the life of a four-year-old boy at a kindergarten boarding school and his struggles to fit in to a strictly regimented routine.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 25 yuan, including soft drink and popcorn

Tel: 8404 4166

Exhibition

Nothing Lasts Forever

The Shanghai-based artist Shi Qing designs and builds eight different types of road blockades reminiscent of makeshift barriers often found on battlefields or in besieged urban areas. Each is constructed to fit across specific entry and exit points in Jianchang Hutong.

Where: Arrow Factory, 38 Jianchang Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: Until February 1, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Email:

arrowfactory@gmail.com



Sun, Jan. 22



Exhibition

Rearview Circumstances

Zhang Lun's first solo exhibition on the mainland includes oil paintings of landscapes she created over the past three years. In the summer of 2008, Zhang bought a car and drove it between her home and studio. She found, on her way, a distinct world that was either flying backwards or moving forward in her rearview mirror

Where: Space Station, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 7, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9671

Concert

Teresa Teng's Classic Songs

It's said that "wherever there are Chinese people, the songs of Teresa Teng can be heard." Teng was famous for her folk songs and romantic ballads. The singer Liu Qianwen, regarded as "little Teresa Teng," presents Teng's classic songs.

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei

Mon, Jan. 23

Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6605 5812



Tue, Jan. 24



Dance

Ballet Third Symphony by Gustav Mahler

Created between 1895 and 1896, Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 3 highlights his view of nature. Mahler originally called this composition A Summer's Midday Dream. According to his principle that "symphony must cover everything like the whole world," Mahler attempted to define all sounds of nature in this piece. Based on Mahler's work, John Neumeier, artistic director of Hamburg Ballet, choreographs and creates the ballet under the same title.

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-800 yuan

Tel: 6436 8998



Wed, Jan. 25

Dance

Swan Lake

Russian National Ballet Theater presents *Swan Lake*, accompanied by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra.

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6500 1188

Thu, Jan. 26

Exhibition

Sound of Tranquil Country Road

This is a group exhibition of young artists who live in a relatively stable society, but in an unstable economic environment. Silence, hidden self, reserve and loneliness are their similarities.

Where: Gallery Yang, Unit 47 & 48, N2 Building, Sanlitun Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 15, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6417 9419

(By He Jianwei)



15

Next week

Editor: He Jianwei Designer: Zhao Yan

BEIJING TODAY

Seeking authentic festival flavor in the suburbs

By Zhang Dongya

For newcomers to the city, Spring Festival in Beijing is a scene to behold, with fireworks and merriment galore.

But old hands who have tired of the all-day (and night) pyrotechnics and insipid temple fairs may want to try something different. Here's an option: going out to the suburbs, where traditional celebrations are combined with a sense of reverie and excitement.

Activities include authentic farmers' feasts, operas in rural theaters and village temple fairs. You can also soak at a resort and pick fresh vegetables and fruits.



A frozen lake in Xiangju Lou in Wali Town
Photo by Mockingbird



Now is the time to pick up strawberries in suburban Beijing.

CFP Photos

Rustic feast in Xiangju Lou

If you're searching for a place to have a big rural dinner, Xiangju Lou in Wali Town in Changping District is recommended. The village has free-range chickens, pigs and freshwater fish. Edible wild vegetables and a variety of grains are also essential elements of the feast.

The villagers cook everything in large caldrons. Dozens are used to stew meat, heated by a wood-powered flame underneath. The meat is soft and falls off the bones, with a bright color and fresh taste.

One of their signature dishes is Wali Chicken. The meat is fresh and tender. It is served with corn on the cob.

Exotic vegetables abound. Kuju, a kind of chrysanthemum with a bitter taste, is said to reduce internal heat. It can be paired with edible amaranth, which is refreshing.

Hot soy milk is served, compliments of the house.

After dinner, you can rest in the yard. A small amusement park features some rides and facilities, such as a swing set and seesaw. A small feeding zoo is also open, with cattle, goats and ostriches. Nearby is Wali Museum, a small site built by a local.

It shows the town's history and some farm tools.

Around the resort is Jiuhuashan Hot Spring, where you can take a soak before returning to the city.

Getting there: Drive along Beijing-Chengde Expressway and take Baimalu exit. Drive in the direction of the Special Policeman College for another 2 kilometers. Or take Subway Line 8 to Yuxin and take Bus 629 to Xisanqi Qiaodong and walk to Xiangju Lou.

Tel: 6171 4090

Admission: 20 yuan, including amusement park, zoo and museum

Strawberry picking in Fragrant Hills

The fifth Fragrant Hill Strawberry Festival opened this month. More than 30 greenhouse canopies were added, and more strawberries are available for picking. An employee said the strawberries have ripened earlier this year due to the warm weather. They will harvest around 100,000 kilograms in more than 110 canopies.

There's a wide variety of strawberries on display, and all are organic. Visitors are advised to pick with care. The picking will end in May.

Getting there: Drive along West

Fourth Ring Road and take Sihai qiao exit. Drive toward Fragrant Hills and turn right at Hanhe Lu; drive for another 1.5 kilometers. The destination is located opposite of Wan'an Cemetery.

Price: 40-60 yuan per kilogram.

Unwind at Dragon Resort

Being the Year of the Dragon – a special year – Dragon Resort has taken care to decorate its interior. Its rooms are named after palaces and decorated with Qing Dynasty murals and lanterns.

There's a hot springs corridor that connects 48 private yards with a long stone path, forming a tranquil and elegant atmosphere.

Bamboo thickets separate the yards, giving visitors more private space. The rooms aren't big, but they're cozy. There are "ice-fire pools" in the yard, which offer a hot spring pool and a cooler one.

Getting there: Drive along Anli Lu in Chaoyang District and go north on Litang Lu. After passing through Tiantongyuan, drive west to Baige Lu from Daliushu Island.

Tel: 6178 2666

Admission: 298 yuan per person, including hot spring, one-night lodging and dinner